tion Benefit Programme and an amount of Rs. 267 crore has already been released during the current financial year.

The progress of the dam construction is constrained mainly due to Civil Writ Petition filed by Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) in the Hon'ble Supreme Court in 1994. Supreme Court has permitted to raise the height of the dam upto RL 85 meters excluding humps for the safety of the Dam in its interim order dated 18.02.1999. Further raising of the height of the Dam depends upon the direction of Hon'ble Supreme Court. The matter is subjudice.

Financial and Administrative Powers of Directors of Postal Services in the N.E. Region

*328. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Directors of the Postal Services posted in the Divisions under the shillong based North East Circle have practically no financial and administrative powers, though their counterparts posted elsewhere in the country as Heads of Divisions are vested with full controlling powers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether this centralisation of power in the hands of the P.M.Gs has been resulting in deterioration of efficiency in the Postal Services of the region?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) The Directors of Postal Services incharge of Divisions in NE Circle, were delegated all the administrative powers of Directors of Postal Services posted elsewhere in the country. Initially, they were also vested with financial powers in excess of those delegated to Senior Superintendents, who are heads of Divisions, and upto those Directors of Postal Services, to be exercised in consultation with Circle Intergrated Finance Advice. Subsequently, in view of difficulty experienced in management of expenditure and use of scant resources with so many Directors of Postal Services exercising financial powers, the CPMG of NE Circle directed the Directors of Postal Services incharge of Divisions, to submit proposals of expenditures beyond powers of Divisional Superintendents to Circle

Office for necessary action. Thus, proposals exceeding the financial powers of Divisional Superintendents are now processed in the Circle Office and this practice is facilitating prioritisation of proposals of expenditures and financial control. In this respect, the powers exercised by Directors of Postal Services in divisions of the N.E. Circle are the same as those exercised by similar Directors of Postal Services elsewhere.

The basic administrative unit for management of postal services in the field is a Division which is headed by Superintendent/Senior Superintendent. The Directors of Postal Services, who are in the Junior Administrative Grade, usually function as staff officer assisting regional PMG or CPMG in Circle. Keeping in view the peculiar and special needs of NE regions and to ensure effective management and development of postal services, it was decided to place the administrative control of postal division in NE Circle under Director of Postal services, and consequently five existing posts of Divisional Superintendents were upgraded to the level of Director of Postal Services.

Placing Directors of Postal Services incharge of administration of postal divisions in NE Circle has not resulted in centralisation of power in hands of PMGs nor is there any deterioration of efficiency in postal services of the region. Directors of Postal Services as Divisional heads in NE Circle have been responsible for increased efficiency of postal services with expansion and improvement in the quality of customer services in the NE Circle along with modernisation, keeping pace with developments elsewhere in the country, as will be evident from the following:

(i) In the last two years, 72 Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices and 6 Departmental Sub Post Offices have been sanctioned and an additional 71 letter boxes have been installed.

(ii) On an average a Post Office in NE Circle serves a population of 3101 against the All India average of 5502.

(iii) In the year 1999 the route length of Mail Motor Service lines was extended by 247 kms. and runner lines by 432 kms. Eight departmental Mail Vans in 1997-98 and three such Mail Vans in 1998-99 were provided to the Circle and an Inter-State

Mail Motor Schedule was introduced on the routes Aizwal to Silcher, Itanagar to North Lakhimpur and Auquri to Mokokchung.

(iv) Modernisation of services have been effected with new technology introducing 41 Multi-Purpose Counter Machines (MPCMs) in 18 Post Offices providing speedy and accurate counter services and 4 VSATs at Agartala Aizwal, Kohima and shillong improving the efficiency of money order services.

(v) A computerised Registration Centres has been set up at Shillong and computerised Customer Care Centres have been set up at Agartala and Shillong.

Comprehensive Bill on Electoral Reforms

*328. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to introduce a comprehensive electoral reforms bill so as to wed out the muscle and money power;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the proposed legislation is to be brought forward?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM JETHMALANI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Government is committed to bring necessary reforms in electoral laws. In this regard, the recommendations made by the Dinesh Goswami and Indrajit Gupta Comittees as also the recommendations made by the law Commission in its 170th Report in addition to the proposals/suggestions received from various other sources will be taken into account for prepering the comprehensive electoral reforms Bill. The sugject matter however, being sensitive needs careful deliberations and hence no time frame can be suggested in this regard.